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THE TWO LAST SPEECHES OF Thomas Wentworth, Late EARLE of *Strafford*, and *Deaputy* of IRELAND.

The one in the Tower, the other on the *SCAFFOLD* on Tower-Hill, *May* the 12th. 1641.

Newly revized by the perfectest Coppy, with more Additions, which was meerly left out by an over-sight.

London Printed, 1641.

His ſpeech in the Tower to the Lords, before he went to execution.

RIght Honourable, and the reſt, you are now come to convey me to my death, I am willing to dye, which is a thing no more than all our Predeceſſors have done, and a debt that our Poſterity muſt in their due time diſcharge, which ſince it can be no way avoyded, it ought the leſſe to be feared; for that which is common to all, ought not to be intollerable to any: It is the Law of Nature, the tribute of the fleſh, a remedy from all worldly cares and troubles; and to the truly penitent, a perfect path to bleſſednesſe. And there is but one death, though ſeverall wayes unto it: mine is not naturall, but enforced by the Law and Iuſtice: It hath beene ſaid that the Lawes vex only the meaner ſort of people, but the mightie are able to withſtand them: it is not ſo with mee, for to the Law I ſubmit my ſelfe, and confeſſe that I receive nothing but juſtice: for he that politikly intendeth good to a Common weale, may be called a juſt man, but he that practiſeth either for his owne profit, or any other ſiniſter ends, may bee well termed a delinquent perſon; neither is delay in puniſhment any privledge for pardon. And moreover, I ingenuouſly confeſſe with *Cicero*, That the death of the bad is the ſafety of the good that be alive.

Let no man truſt either in the favour of his Prince, the friendſhip and conſanguinity of his Peeres, much leſſe in his owne wiſdom and knowledge, of which I ingenuouſly confeſſe I have beene too confident. Kings, as they are men before God, ſo they are Gods before men, and I may ſay with a great man once in this Kingdome, *Had I ſtrived to obey my God as faithfully, as I ſought to honour my King diligently, I had ſtood, and not fallen.* Moſt happie and fortunate is that Prince, who is as much for his juſtice feared, as for his goodneſſe beloved: For the greater that Princes are in power above other, the more they ought in vertue to excell other; and ſuch is the Royall Soveraigne whom I late ſerved.

For my Peeres, the correſpondence that I had with them during my proſperity, was to me very delightfull and pleaſing, and here they have commiſerated my ruine, I have plentifully found, who (for the moſt generous of them) I may boldly ſay, though they have deteſted the fact, yet they have pitied the perſon delinquent; the firſt in their loyaltie, the laſt in their Charity: ingenuouſly confeſſing, that never any ſub-

ject, or Peere of my rank, had ever that helpe of Counſell, that benefit of time, or a more free and legall tryall than I have had: in the like wherof, none of my preceſſors hath had ſo much favour from his Prince, ſo much ſufferance from the people; in which I comprehend the underſtanding Commons, not the many headed monſter, Multitude: But I have offended, am ſentenced, and muſt now ſuffer.

And for my too much confidence in my ſuppoſed wiſdom and knowledge, therein have bin the moſt deceived: for he is wiſe to himſelfe, that knowes by others faults to correct his owne offences: to be truly wiſe is to be Secretaries to our ſelves; for it is meere folly to reveale our intimate thoughts to ſtrangers: wiſdom is the moſt precious Gem with which the mind can bee adorned, and learning the moſt famous thing for which a man ought to be eſteemed, and true wiſdom teacheth us to do well, as to ſpeake well: in the firſt I have failed, for *the wiſdome of man is fooliſhneſſe with God.*

For knowledge, it is a thing indifferent both to good and evill, but the beſt knowledge is for a man to know himſelfe; hee that doth ſo ſhall eſteeme of himſelfe but little, for he conſidereth from whence he came, and wherto he muſt go, he regardeth not the vain pleaſures of this life, he exalteth God, and ſtrives to live in his feare; but he that knoweth not himſelfe, is wilfull in his owne wayes, unprofitable in his life, unfortunate in his death, and ſo am I. But the reaſon why I ſought to attaine unto it, was this: I have read that he that knoweth not that which he ought to know, is a Bruit beaſt amongſt men; he that knoweth more than he ought to know, is a man amongſt beaſts: but he that knoweth all that may be known, is a God amongſt men. To this I much aſpired, in this I much failed; *Vanity of vanities, all is but vanity.*

I have heard the people clamour and cry out, ſaying, That through my occaſion the times are bad, I wiſh that when I am dead they may proove better: moſt true it is, that there is at this time a great ſtorme impending (God in his mercy averte it.) And ſince it is my particular lot, like *Ionah*, to be caſt into the ſea, I ſhall thinke my life well ſpent, to appeaſe Gods wrath, and ſatisfie the peoples malice.

O what is eloquence more than aire? faſhioned with an articulate and diſtinct ſound, when it is a ſpeciall vertue to ſpeake little and well, and ſilence is oft the beſt oratory; for fooles in their dumbneſſe may be accounted wiſe: It hath power to make a good matter ſeeme bad, and a bad cauſe appeare good: but mine was to me unprofitable, and like the Cypreſſe trees, which are great and tall, but altogether without fruit.

What is honour? but the firſt ſtep to diſquietneſſe, and power is ſtill

waited on by envie, neither hath it any priviledge against infamy. It is held to be the chiefe part of honour, for a man to joyne to his office and calling, curtesie and affibility, commiseration and pity: for thereby he draweth to him with a kind of compulsion, the hearts of the multitude. But that was the least part of my study, which now makes me call to mind, that the greater the persons are in authoritie, the sooner they are catcht in any delinquency, and their smallest crimes are thought to be Capitall, the smallest spot seems great in the finest linnen, and the least flaw is soonest found in the richest Diamond. But high and Noble spirits finding themselves wounded, grieve not so much at their own paine and perplexitie, as at the derision and scoffs of their enemy: but for mine own part, though I might have many in my life, I hope to find none in my death.

Amongst other things which pollute and contaminate the minds of great spirits, there is none more heinous than Ambition, which is seldome unaccompanied with Avarice: Such to possesse their ends, care not to violate the Lawes of Religion, and Reason, and to breake the bonds of Modesty and equity, with the nearest tyes of Consanguinity, and Amity; of which as I have bin guilty, so I crave at Gods hands forgiveneſſe. It is a Maxime in Philosophy, that ambitious men can be never good Counsellours to Princes; the desire of having more is common to great Lords, and a desire of Rule a great cause of their Ruine.

My Lords, I am now the hopeleſſe President, may I be to you all an happy example: For Ambition devoureth gold, and drinketh bloud, and climbeth so high by other mens heads, that at the length in the fall it breaketh its own neck: therefore it is bettter to live in humble content, than in high care and trouble: For more precious is want with honesty, than wealth with infamy: For what are we but meere Vapours, which in a serene Element ascend high, and upon an inſtant, like Smoake vanish into nothing: or like ships without Pilots, tost up and downe upon the Seas by contrary winds and tempests. But the good husbandman thinkes better of those eares of Corne, which bow down, and grow crooked, than those which are straight and upright, because he is assured to finde more store of graine in the one than in the other. This all men know, yet of this, how few make use: The defect wherof must be now my paine: may my suffering prove to others profit.

For what hath now the favour of my Prince, the familiarity with my Peeres, the volubility of a tongue, the strength of my memory, my learning, or knowledge, my honours, or Offices, my power, and potency, my riches, and treasure, (all these the speciall gifts, both of Nature, and Fortune) what have all these profited me? Blessings I acknow-

knowledge, though by God bestowed upon man, yet not all of them together upon many: yet by the Divine providence, the most of them met in me: of which had I made happy use, I might still have flourisht, who now am forc'd immaturely to fall.

I now could wish, (but that *nisi* is too late) that God with his outward goodnes towards me had so commixed his inward grace, that I had chused the *medium* path, neither inclining to the right hand, nor deviating to the left; but like *Icarus* with my waxen wings, tearing by too low a flight to moysten them with the Waves: I soared too high, and too neare the Sun, by which they being melted; I ayming at the highest, am precipitated to the lowest: and am made a wretched prey to the Waters: But I who before built my house upon the sand, have now setled my hopes upon the Rock my Saviour: by whose only merits my sole trust is, that whatsoever becomes of my body, yet in this bosome my soule may be Sanctuaried.

Nimrod would have built a Tower to reach up to Heaven, and cald it *Babel*; but God turned it to the confusion of Languages, and dissipation of the people. *Pharaoh* kept the Children of *Israel* in Bondage, and after having freed them, in his great pride would have made them his prey; but God gave them a dry and miraculous passage, and *Pharaoh* and his hoast a watry Sepulcher. *Belshazzer* feasted his Princes and Prostitutes, who drunke healths in the Vessels taken from the Temple, but the hand of God writ upon the wall, *Mene. Tekel. Phorès*, and that night before morning was both his kingdome and life taken from him: Thus God lets men goe on a great while in their owne devices, but in the end it proves their owne ruine and destruction, never suffering them to effect their desired purposes: therefore let none presume upon his power, glory in his greatnesse, or be too confident in his riches: These things were written for our Instruction, of which the living may make use, the dying cannot; but wit and unfruitfull wisdom are the next neighbours to folly.

There can bee no greater vanity in the world, than to esteeme the world, which regardeth no man; and to make slight account of God who greatly respecteth all men; and there can be no greater folly in man, than by much Travell to increase his goods, and pamper his body, and in the interim with vaine delights and pleasures, to lose his soule. It is a great folly in any man to attempt a bad beginning, in hope of good ending; and to make that proper to one, which was before common to all, is meere indiscretion, and the beginning of discord, which I positively wish may end in this my punishment.

O how small a proportion of earth will containe my body, when

my high minde could not be confined within the ſpacious compaſſe of two Kingdoms ? But my houre draweth on, and I conclude with the Pſalmiſt, not ayming at any one man in particular, but ſpeaking for all in generall : *How long will you Judges be corrupted ? how long will yee ceaſe to give true Judgement ? &c. Bleſſed is the man that doth not walke in the Councell of the wicked, nor ſtand in the way of ſinners, nor ſit in the ſeat of the ſcornefull, therefore they ſhall not ſtand in the Judgement, nor ſinners in the aſſembly of the righteous, &c.*

About the houre of 12 a Clocke the aforeſaid Lord of *Strafford* was conveyed to the Scaffold on Tower-Hill, where was a Court of Guard made by the ſeverall Companies of Souldiers of the City of *London*, and the hamlets of the Tower on each ſide as he paſſed to the Scaffold: before marched the Marſhalls men to make way, then the Sheriffes of Londons Officers with their Halberds; after them the Kings Guard, or warders of the Tower; Next came one of his Gentlemen, bare headed, in mourning Habit, the Lord *Strafford* following him clad in blacke cloath, with divers others in the ſame habit, which were his attendance; then the Lord Biſhop of *Armagh*, and other good Divines; with the Sheriffes of London, and divers honourable perſonages.

when he came to the Scaffold, he there ſhewed himſelfe on each ſide in full view to all people, and made this ſhort ſpeech, with as much alacrity of Spirit, as a mortall man could expreſſe, *viz.*

The EARLE of Straffords laſt Speech on the Scaffold.

MY Lord Primate of *Ireland*, (and my Lords, and the reſt of theſe Gentlemen) it is a very great comfort for me to have your Lordſhip by mee this day, in regard I have beene knowne to you a long time, I ſhould be very glad to obtaine ſo much ſilence, as to be heard a few words, but I doubt I ſhall not, my Lord. I come hither by the good will and pleaſure of Almighty God, to pay that laſt debt I owe unto ſinne, which is death, and by the bleſſing of that God to riſe againe through the merits of Chriſt Ieſus to eternall glory: I wiſh I had beene private, that I might have beene heard, my Lord, if I might be ſo much beholding to you, that I might uſe a few words, I ſhould take it for a very great courteſie: my Lord, I come hither to ſubmit to that judgement which hath paſt againſt me, I doe it with a very quiet and contented mind, I doe freely forgive all the world, a forgiveneſſe that is not ſpoken from the teeth

outward

outward (as they say) but from the heart; I speake it in the presence of Almighty God, before whom I stand, that there is not so much as a displeasing thought in me arising to any creature, I thanke God, I may say truly, and my conscience beares me witnesse, that in all my services, since I have had the honour to serve his Majesty in any imployment, I never had any thing in my heart, but the joynt and individuall prosperity of King and people; if it have beene my hap to be misconstrued, it is the common proportion of us all, while we are in this life, the righteous Iudgement is hereafter; here we are subject to errour, and apt to be mis-judged one of another; there is one thing I desire to cleere my selfe of, and I am very confident, I speake with so much clearnesse, that I hope I shall have your Christian charity in the beleefe of it, I did alwaies ever thinke the Parliaments of England, were the happiest Constitutions, that any Kingdome, or any Nation lived under, and under God the meanes of making King and people happy, so far have I beene from being against Parliaments; for my death I here acquit all the world, and pray God heartily to forgive them: and in particular, my Lord Primate, I am very glad that his Majesty is pleased to conceive me, not meriting so severe and heavy a punishment as the utmost execution of this sentence; I am very glad. and infinitely rejoyce in this mercy of his, and beseech God to turne it to him, that he may find mercy when he hath most need of it; I wish this kingdome all the prosperity and happinesse in the world; I did it living, and now dying it is my wish, I doe now professe it from my heart, and doe most humbly recommend it unto every man here, and wish every man to lay his hand upon his heart, and consider seriously whither the beginning of the happinesse of a people should be written in letters of bloud, I feare you are in a wrong way, and I desire Almighty God that no one drop of my bloud may rise up in Iudgement against you.

My Lord of *Armagh*, I professe my selfe a Protestant, and a true and obedient Son to the *Church* of *England*, to that *Church* wherein I was borne and wherein I was bred; *prosperity and happinesse be ever to it*: and whereas it hath beene said that I have enclin'd to *Popery*, if it be an objection worth answering, let me say truly, that from the time since I was one and twenty yeares of age, till this houre, now going upon nine and forty, I never had thought in my heart, to doubt of the truth of my *Religion*, nor to my best memory durst any ever profer it any kind whatsoever; and so being reconciled to the mercies of *Christ Iesus* my *Saviour*, into *Whose bosome I hope shortly to be gathered, to enjoy those eternall happinesses that shall never have end*. I desire heartily the forgiveneſſe of every man, both for any rash or unadvised word or deede,

and

and desire your prayers; *And so my Lords farewel, farewell all things of this world, Lord strengthen my faith; give me confidence and assurance in the merits of* Christ Iesus. *I desire you that you would be silent, and joyne in Prayers with me, and for me; and I trust in* God *that we shall all meet, and live eternally in Heaven, there to receive the accomplishment of al happinesse, where every teare shall be wiped from our eyes, and every sad thought from our harts: And so God blesse this* Kingdom & Iesus *have mercy on my Soule.*

Then turning himselfe about, he saluted all the Noble-men, and took a solemne leave of all considerable persons on the Scaffold, giving them his hand.

And after that he said, Gentlemen, I would say my prayers, and I entreat you all to pray with me, and for me: then his Chaplaine laid the booke of Common Praier upon the chaire before him, as he kneeled down, on which he praied almost a quarter of an houre, then he prayed as long or longer without a booke, and ended the Lords prayer; then standing up he spies his brother, Sir George Wentworth, and cals him to him, and saith; Brother, We must part, *Remember me to my* SISTER, *and to my* WIFE, *and carry my blessing to my eldest Son, and charge him from me, that he feare God, and continue an obedient son of the Church of England, that he should approve himselfe a faithfull subject to the King, and tell him that he should not have any private grudge or revenge towards any concerning me, and bid him beware that he meddle not with Church-livings, for that will prove a moth and Canker to him in his estate; and wish him to content himselfe to be a servant to his Country, as a Iustice of Peace in his County, and not aiming at higher preferments: carry my blessing also to my daughters,* ANNE *and* ARABELLA, *charge them to feare and serve God, and he will blesse them, not forgetting my littl. infant, that yet knowes neither good nor evill, and cannot speake for it selfe, God spake for it and blesse it.* Then said he, *Now I have nigh done, one stroke will make my wife Husbandlesse, my deare children fatherlesse, and my poore servants masterlesse, and separate me from my deare brother and all my friends, but let God be to you and them all in all.*

After that, going to take off his doublet, and to make himselfe unready, he said, *I thanke God I am no more afraid of death, nor daunted with any discouragement rising from any feares, but doe authoritie put off my doublet at this time, as ever I did when I went to bed. Then he put off his doublet, and wound up his haire with his hands, and put on a white Cap.*

Then he called, Where is the man that should do this last office (meaning the Executioner) call him to me. When he came and ask: him forgiveneſſe, he told him he forgave him and all the world. Then kneeling downe by the block, he went to prayer again himselfe, the Bishop of Armagh kneeling on the on side, and the Minister on the other; to the which Minister after prayer, he turned himselfe, and spoke some few words softly, having his hands lifted up: this Minister closed his hands with his; then bowing himselfe to the earth, to lay his head on the block, he told the Executioner that he would first lay downe his head to try the fitnesse of the blocke, and take it up againe, before he would lay it downe for good and all, and so he did: and before he laid it downe again, he told the Executioner that he would give him warning when to strike, by stretching forth his hands; and then laid downe his necke on the blocke, stretching out his hands, the Executioner struck off his head at one blow, then tooke the head up in his hands, and shewed it to all the people, and said, *God save the King.* Amen.